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Letter dated 15 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, I have the honour to attach a concept note setting out specific proposals for Security Council action on the security implications of climate change (see annex).

We hope that the Security Council can consider our proposals in their deliberations on an outcome from the open debate on maintenance of international peace and security: impact of climate change that will take place on Wednesday, 20 July 2011.

In this regard, we would be grateful if the concept note could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marlene **Moses**
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Annex to the letter dated 15 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pacific small island developing States
Concept note on climate change and security

Climate change is posing urgent security challenges for the Pacific small island developing States today. Climate change is already causing loss of territory, involuntary displacement and a decrease in food and water security, all of which have been identified by the Secretary-General as channels through which international peace and security could be threatened.[a] These impacts are putting enormous pressure on domestic institutions in the Pacific small island developing States, and they will continue to grow worse in the foreseeable future. The Pacific is just one of many regions facing these and other security challenges caused by climate change.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 63/281 marked the first time that the international community collectively recognized the security implications of climate change. The General Assembly, in its resolution, specifically invited the relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications. Despite the resolution, there has been very little concrete or coordinated action at the international level to address the security implications of climate change.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. While the Security Council has traditionally focused its work on inter-State conflict, the role of the Council had evolved to take into account a broader array of threats to international peace and security. The Council on several occasions has recognized the necessity of addressing the root causes of conflict, which has led it to take up a wide range of unconventional security issues, including poverty and development, natural resource scarcity, HIV/AIDS, refugee issues and children in armed conflict.

The report of the Secretary-General on climate change and its possible security implications identified several channels through which climate change could threaten international peace and security. Many of these channels relate to issues that the Security Council has already identified as warranting its attention, including food security, natural resource scarcity, poverty and human migration. One of the key conclusions of the report was that existing mechanisms to address the largely unprecedented challenges posed by climate change might prove inadequate.

Addressing the security implications of climate change requires a different approach than currently adopted, for example, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mobilize financial resources or under the General Assembly to respond to the development challenges.

Responding to the security implications of climate change requires complex risk analysis that is not easily captured by a simple weighing of costs and benefits of

[a] A/64/350.

individual policies in isolation. Security analysis must take into consideration the interaction of many environmental, economic, social and political factors, possible tipping points and non-linear events that have the potential to destabilize existing institutions. Addressing the security implications of climate change will require international institutions to be proactive and head off security threats, including conflict, before they materialize.

In this context, the Pacific small island developing States warmly welcome Germany's proposal to hold an open debate in the Security Council on the security implications of climate change under its presidency in July 2011. The Pacific small island developing States are making specific proposals for Security Council action on the security implications on climate change. First, the Security Council should clearly recognize the threat of climate change to international peace and security. This link was recognized in General Assembly resolution 63/287 and clearly established in the report of the Secretary-General on climate change and its possible security implications, as well as in numerous other highly regarded academic and governmental publications.

Secondly, the Council has a moral and legal duty to respond to current and projected threats with appropriate corresponding action. In this regard, the Council should request the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Climate and Security Response, with appropriate support, to report to the Security Council every six months on threats to international peace and security resulting from the current and projected adverse impacts of climate change.

Thirdly, the Security Council should request the Secretary-General to evaluate and report on the capacity of the specialized agencies to respond to the security impacts of climate change, as well as to offer recommendations on how to enhance the capacity of the United Nations and improve its response to meet the security challenges.

Addressing the security implications of climate change requires new approaches and the engagement of new institutions. These proposals provide a constructive first step towards building the capacity of the United Nations system to effectively address the unprecedented challenges faced by all nations.